

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 5-12, and 21-30 are pending. Claims 2-4 and 13-20 are canceled without prejudice. Claims 1, 5, 6, 10, and 11 are amended. Claims 8, 9, and 12 are withdrawn. New claims 21-30 are added. No new matter has been introduced. Applicant believes the claims comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Applicant notes with appreciation the indicated allowability of claim 4 if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claims 3 and 4. Accordingly, claim 1 and claims 5-9 depending therefrom are patentable.

Independent claim 10 has been amended to include the limitations of claims 3 and 4 as well. Therefore, claim 10 and claims 11-12 and 29-30 depending therefrom are also allowable.

Applicant respectfully submits that new independent claim 21 is novel and patentable over Reed et al. and Isaac because, for instance, they do not teach or suggest that the end of the line comprises a flared end coupled with the fitting, wherein the flared end is flared outwardly with an enlarged size to capture the fitting.

Isaac does not show a flared end at all. In Reed et al., Fig. 13 shows a hole having a flared or countersunk portion but not a line having a flared end coupled with the fitting, wherein the flared end is flared outwardly with an enlarged size to capture the fitting. Examples of such a configuration are illustrated in Fig. 2 (flared end 48) and Fig. 5 (flared end 70). For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 21 and claims 22-28 depending therefrom are allowable.

Because independent claims 1, 10, and 21 are allowable, Applicant respectfully requests that the withdrawn claims be reinstated and allowed.

CONCLUSION

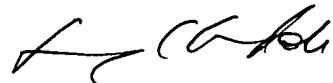
In view of the foregoing, Applicant believes all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

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Amdt. dated February 26, 2004
Reply to Office Action of November 26, 2003

PATENT

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,



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